

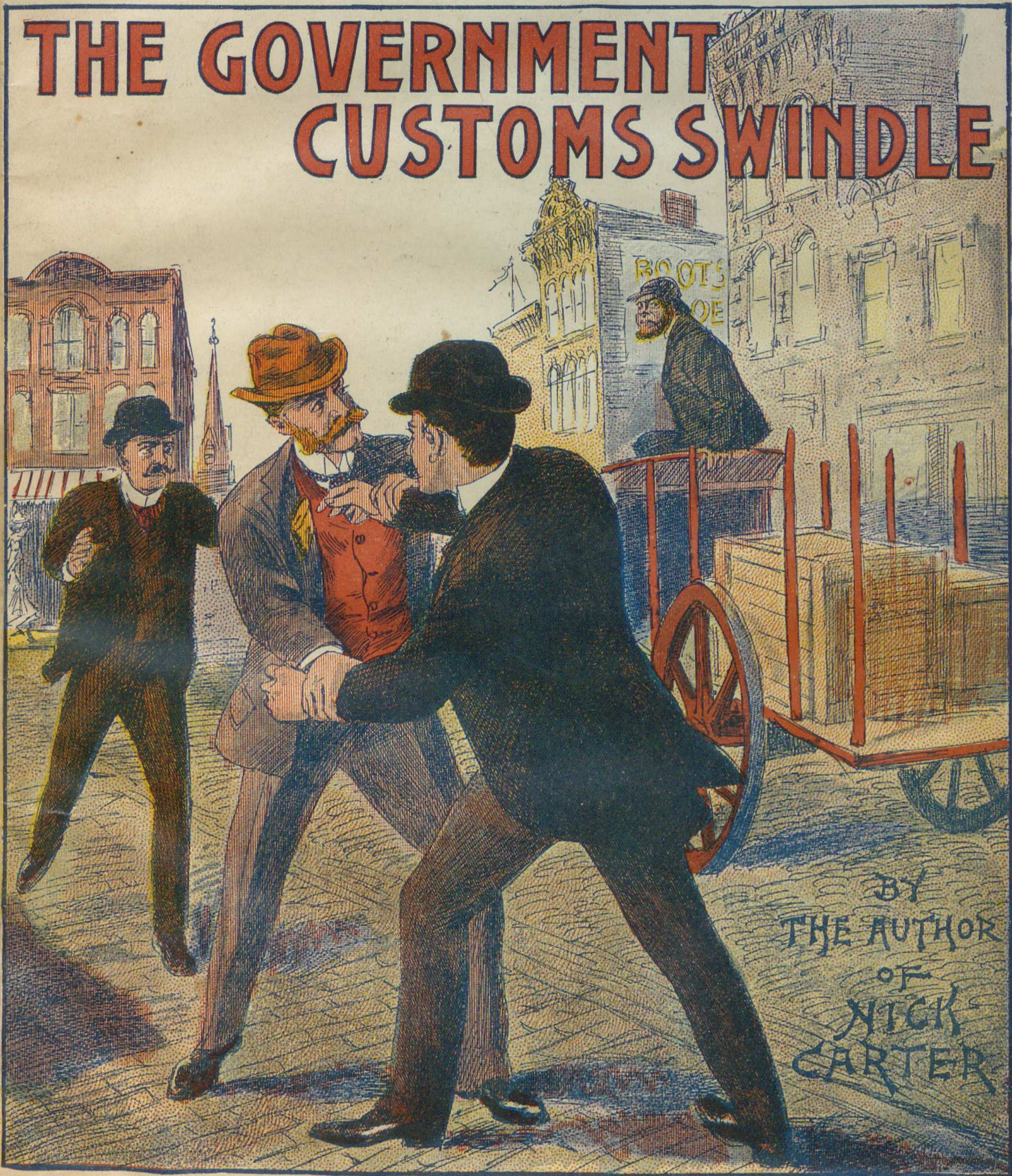
NICK CARTER WEEKLY

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THE GOVERNMENT CUSTOMS SWINDLE



BY
THE AUTHOR
OF
NICK
CARTER

"YOU FOOL!" HISSED NICK, AS HE CAUGHT PATSON BY THE WRISTS.

NICK CARTER WEEKLY.

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The Government Custom's Swindle;

OR,

NICK CARTER'S WORK FOR THE U. S. TREASURY.

By the Author of "NICK CARTER."

CHAPTER I.

A GOVERNMENT AFFAIR.

"I have a mind to demand the resignation of every agent connected with the force," exclaimed one of the heads of the secret service branch of the Treasury Department, as he knit his brows angrily.

"Why, what's the matter, colonel?" questioned the person addressed, the chief of a bureau in the War Office.

"Matter enough. There's a crafty imp of Satan over in Canada who has amassed a million in smuggling fur goods across the line."

"And your agents have not yet succeeded in running him down, eh?"

"No. I have sent scores of my best men, in every conceivable disguise, to Quebec,

Montreal and Ottawa, and they haven't gathered a single grain of evidence against him."

"He must be in league with the Evil One, indeed."

"And the worst of it is that Logan, the best detective I ever had, who served his apprenticeship under Baker and Pinkerton—old Allan—had his hands on the fellow two days ago, and let him slide."

"That's bad."

"Bad! It was downright stupidity. The smuggler went to London last month—I got this piece of news from Scotland Yard—and, after a splurge that cost him thousands of dollars, engaged passage for America by a certain steamer, giving out to his rascally friends that he intended to extend his trip through the United States, and that he would

make the most of his journey in the seclusion of his sleeping-car berth, secure from the prying eyes of the officers of the law."

"And your agents failed to take advantage of this clew?"

"Logan did, certainly, though he worked his points well up to a certain stage.

"A full description of the fellow was sent to me, which I placed in the hands of Logan.

"The steamer arrived in Halifax, and our man went on to Quebec, where he remained two days.

"Logan occupied the same car with him, and when this fellow bought a ticket for New York, and had received checks for fourteen trunks, which he intended to take with him, the detective rubbed his hands in proud satisfaction."

"He thought he would soon have the rascal without much trouble, eh?"

"Yes. And now comes the disgusting part of the affair. When the frontier station was reached Logan, with a number of local officers, who had been wired to be on hand, walked into Mr. Smoothy's car and informed him that he was the much-wanted P. D. Marquette. As every one of his trunks was marked P. D. M., and as he completely answered the Scotland Yard description, there wasn't much chance of his getting off, one would think."

"I should think not."

"And yet Logan let him go."

"I can't understand——"

"Nor can I," interrupted the other, with an expression of disgust.

"But what was Logan's explanation of his strange conduct?"

"He wrote that the fellow proved to his sat-

isfaction that he was P. D. Mason, and not P. D. Marquette, and that he was a reputable tradesman of Albany."

"What sort of proof did he bring forward?"

"The statement of two of his fellow-passengers and the positive asseveration of the conductor."

"Perhaps it is a case of mistaken identity."

"Not at all, for half an hour after the train had left the frontier station the plain evidence reached Logan—who had remained behind with the locals—that the man he had permitted to go was indeed Marquette.

"He then wired ahead to have him detained, but the wily rascal, who is as sly and cunning as the foxes whose skins he deals in, had foreseen the exposure, and at the first junction he had taken the back track and was safe on Dominion soil with his trunks before Logan learned of his change of tactics."

"Where is your detective now?"

"In Canada. He swears he will overhaul the fellow yet. But I have lost confidence in him."

"It seems to me," remarked the representative of the War Office, "that Logan acted with proper judgment and discretion when he tacitly accepted Marquette's representations and declined to make the arrest."

"I don't agree with you."

"Let us suppose that the man with the trunks was P. D. Mason and not P. D. Marquette."

"Very well."

"In that case, if the arrest had been made, Logan, or the department he represents, would have been sued for false imprisonment and probably mulcted in heavy damages."

"The Government would have paid the bill."

"And Logan would have been discharged."

"Well, as to that——"

"There is no doubt about it. A reputable citizen publicly arrested as a notorious smuggler would have caused such a hubbub over the affair that the arresting officer would assuredly have lost his position."

"Still, Logan ought to have taken the chances."

"He is too careful an officer to make a bad break."

"And at the same time," said the secret service official, "he is not keen enough to see when he has the game in his own hands."

"We are none of us perfect."

"There are detectives who would have stripped the mask from Marquette in an instant."

"I know of only one who might have overmatched your smart Canadian smuggler in cunning."

"You must refer to Nick Carter."

"I do."

"By the great horn spoon! he is the man I want," exclaimed the secret service official, with emphasis.

"I would like to have my friend, Nick, take the case."

"I'll wire Superintendent Byrnes at once."

"It is not necessary, colonel."

"No?"

"Nick Carter is in Washington. I met him an hour ago."

The colonel's face beamed with pleasure.

"Where is he now? Do you know?"

"He is at Willard's. A telephone will bring him here in fifteen minutes. He told me

he had something to do which would occupy him for an hour or more."

The telephone was brought into requisition.

Nick Carter answered the summons.

For more than two hours he was closeted with the official of the secret service department.

At the end of the consultation he left the office, and was a passenger on the late afternoon train for New York.

The next morning, after issuing certain instructions to Chick, his courageous and skillful assistant, the great detective set out for Quebec.

He realized that he was entering upon a difficult undertaking, for Marquette was a man of great wealth, as unscrupulous as he was cunning, and by long odds the largest and most successful offender under the United States customs laws ever known.

To catch him at his unlawful practices, and at the same time put a stop to his gigantic system of smuggling, would require patience, cunning, resolution and courage of the first order.

Nick Carter was not dismayed at the prospect before him.

The greater the obstacles in a case, the keener the zest with which he entered upon the struggle.

That night he occupied a room in a Quebec hotel.

Before he had been twenty-four hours in the place he had picked up, in a casual way, a number of important items.

Quebec is a city where little business is done, but it is a place of great historical interest.

Hundreds of tourists resort there annually.

These tourists are persons of wealth for the most part.

In Quebec at this time was one of the largest and finest fur stores in the world.

P. D. Marquette was the proprietor, and as nearly all the cabmen, or "carters," in the city were in his pay, the tourist was always driven to his establishment as one of the sights.

The spectacle presented there was indeed worth seeing, for nowhere else under one roof could be found such costly furs of every description.

Mr. Marquette, a large man with a bald head, twinkling gray eyes, and voice low and sweet as that of a woman, was standing in the door of his establishment on the afternoon of the day following Nick Carter's arrival in Quebec, when a cab drove up, and a young man, whose attire and facial appearance seemed to proclaim him an Englishman of wealth and distinction, alighted and came forward.

Marquette smiled benevolently, and invited him to enter and inspect the store.

The Englishman did not break out into expressions of enthusiastic delight at what he saw.

On the contrary, he was as cool as a cucumber, as the proprietor escorted him through the immense establishment.

"Did you ever see anything finer than that?" said Marquette, as he indicated a sable-lined coat that would have been fine enough for a Vanderbilt.

The Englishman calmly inspected the garment through his eye-glass.

"Well, you know," he drawled, "I cawn't see anything the matter with it, really I cawn't."

"Just the thing to encase a gentleman's form when he drives on the boulevard next winter," insisted Marquette.

"Deah me, but it wouldn't look out of place, really. How much?"

A remarkably low price was named.

Before the Englishman could express an opinion, the smiling and oily Marquette called his attention to a lady's sealskin coat, calculated to drive the average society belle wild with envy when observed on the person of a rival.

"What could be a more fitting present for a wife or sweetheart?" said Marquette. "You may have it at half the New York price."

The Englishman stared hard at the merchant.

"You must get them very cheap," he said.

"I do. I haven't a brother," laughed Marquette, "who steals them for me, nor do I employ a force of hunters and trappers. At the same time, I enjoy unusually excellent facilities for underselling any other firm in the world."

"Really, my deah sir, I would be pleased to purchase the goods, but I cawn't, don't you know. To be plain, I am not prepared in a financial sense, don't you see?"

"That makes no difference," said Mr. Marquette. "You can send me your check whenever you please."

This was a strange proposition for a business man to make, and yet, though Marquette had sold on unlimited credit, he had lost very few accounts.

This plan would not work well in either Boston or New York, but the astute Marquette, of Quebec, had made a fortune out of it.

The Englishman softly caressed his beard as he pretended to gravely consider the matter.

"It's all very well, my deah sir—the price, don't you know, and the dused good opinion you have of me, don't you see, but there's one blawsted thing we haven't thought of, don't you know."

"And what's that?" queried the urbane Marquette.

"It is this. If I bought the goods, my'deah sir, and had them sent to New York, where I am temporarily residing, don't you know, I would have to pay thirty-five per cent. duty, dor't you see? And, besides, I have no way to carry them."

At this point Mr. Marquette proceeded to get in his fine work.

In his most courteous and engaging manner he explained that, by reason of his large business, high standing, etc., he enjoyed special arrangements with the authorities, which enabled him to send his goods very cheap, etc. And that for the modest sum of five dollars he would deliver the goods, duty paid, at the tourist's abode in the United States; and the tourist need not pay until he received them.

Marquette had made this explanation, and was waiting for the Englishman's reply, when a telegram was put into his hands by his head clerk.

He opened the envelope quickly, and read the following:

"NEW YORK, October 17, 1893.

"To P. D. MARQUETTE, Quebec.—L. G. left for Q. yesterday. Treat him well.

"ORSON."

Without a change of countenance, the great fur merchant and smuggler folded the telegram and put it into his pocket-book.

The Englishman was passing his hand over the soft sealskin coat, when Marquette again spoke to him.

"Well, what do you say, sir?"

"I think I'll accept your kind proposal. I cawn't see any objection to it."

"Thank you."

Marquette's face put on a more engaging smile than ever.

The order was booked, a few more questions were asked, and the Englishman took his leave.

He had no sooner passed out of the door than Marquette touched an electric button under one of the large plate glass windows.

In an instant a dark, sharp-faced young man, under the medium height, was by his side.

"You saw the fellow who just left, Peter?"

"Yes, sir."

"Follow him and find out where he is staying and all about him."

"Very well, sir."

Peter was out of the door quick as a flash.

The Englishman walked down the street a few rods, and then halted in front of a jeweler's window.

Out of the corner of his eye he saw Peter, and instantly came to a certain conclusion.

After remaining by the window for a few moments, he hailed a cab and was driven to the hotel where he had registered the day before.

Peter Lafitte was on the sidewalk in front of the hotel office when the Englishman mounted the stairs to his room.

Five minutes sufficed to put the spy in possession of the following information:

The Englishman's name, as indicated by

the register, was Clarence Fitzmaurice, and he represented himself to be the younger son of the Earl of Carriston.

He was well provided with recommendations, and the hotel proprietor had, at the Englishman's own request, telegraphed to a well-known banking house in New York to ascertain his financial standing.

The reply was a most satisfactory one.

Clarence Fitzmaurice could draw on them for a hundred thousand dollars.

Hastening back to his employer, Lafitte rapidly communicated his discoveries.

Marquette listened carelessly, stroked his heavy chin, and smiled.

"I am well acquainted with the Earl of Carriston," he said. "In fact, I saw him two weeks ago at Liverpool."

"Then his son is O. K.?"

"Yes, and—that's all for the present."

Lafitte glided off, and Marquette repaired to his private office.

After talking through the telephone to a person he addressed as Pat for some time, he sat down with a wrinkled brow.

"I might have told Lafitte something that would have opened his eyes," he said to himself, "if any further proceeding in this affair had been within the scope of his duties."

"It is, indeed, true that Carriston's son—he has but one—is at this moment in England, but he is the inmate of an insane asylum."

The merchant smuggler took out the telegram from New York, and re-read it:

"'L. G.'—which means Little Giant, otherwise Nick Carter—'left for Quebec yesterday. Treat him well.' So I will"—rubbing his hands softly together, "so I will, if Pat suc-

ceeds in the little business I have charged him with."

Half an hour later a tall, broad-shouldered Irishman, with a smooth face, utterly devoid of expression, and a pair of small, sleepy eyes, called at — Hotel, and writing a few lines on a card, asked that it be taken to Clarence Fitzmaurice's room.

The clerk's reply made the sleepy look instantly disappear.

"He has gone, sir. Left fifteen minutes ago, just in time to catch the Grand Trunk express."

Suppressing an oath, the Irishman turned and left the office and went to Marquette's store.

A few hours later he was on his way to Montreal.

In the same car with him was a consumptive old gentleman, who was muffled up to his eyes, though the weather was not cold, and who was troubled with such a racking cough that he annoyed the Irishman almost beyond endurance.

Arriving at Montreal after dark, he jumped into a cab, and ordered the driver to take him to Gloster Building.

The consumptive heard the order, and after ascertaining from a porter that there was a hotel across the street from the Gloster, was driven thither a few minutes after the Irishman's departure.

On reaching the hotel, the consumptive coughed a few times for the benefit of the clerk, and then throwing back his coat-collar, gave utterance to a series of chuckles.

"All right now, I reckon," he said, in a strong cheery voice, with a pronounced American accent.

The clerk winked knowingly, and nodded his head.

Upon the register the stranger wrote the following, in a round, clerkly hand:

"JAMES SESSIONS, St. Louis, Mo."

The clerk gazed at the stranger in open-mouthed admiration.

He believed that the man before him was the defaulting bank president, whose plundering operations had been chronicled but a few days before.

The hotel was the resort of defaulters and embezzlers from the United States, but not one of the ilk had ever registered there, whose speculations, like Sessions', ran up into the millions.

After he had been shown to a room, the man from St. Louis opened the blinds of the front window slightly, and looked across the street.

On the first floor of the building opposite was an express office.

As he gazed a man came down the stairs with a small package in his hand.

He so closely resembled the man Pat that he might have been his own brother.

After he had passed into the express office the person who had been watching him nodded his head in satisfaction.

"This is the second station of Marquette's mysterious underground railway," ran his thoughts, "and if my luck holds out, I'll get aboard and travel to the end."

The alleged consumptive, otherwise the defaulting St. Louis bank president, was Nick Carter.

tourist, with the hope of ascertaining how the daring smuggler conducted his nefarious business.

A certain programme, mapped out in his mind when he left the establishment, was changed when he observed that he was being followed.

"That telegram must have given me away," Nick thought. "All right. I'll play another kind of a game, then."

It did not take him long to change his disguise after he had left the hotel.

He had heard the Irishman's conversation with the clerk, from a corner in the office where he was sitting as the consumptive when Pat came in, and he shadowed that worthy to the Grand Trunk Depot, saw him buy a ticket for Montreal, and then took his own measures accordingly.

Nick knew that he would be safe for a week at least in assuming the part of Sessions, the St. Louis defaulter.

The day before he left New York, Sessions had been captured, but his arrest was a profound secret, and publicity would not be given it until the greater part of the money he had stolen had been recovered.

In the opinion of the officers who had charge of the case, this undertaking would occupy about a week in accomplishment.

At the breakfast-room, next morning, Nick saw the man whom he had observed going into the express office, and who bore such a strong resemblance to Pat, the Irishman.

During the forenoon the detective learned that the man's name was Jerry Pursall, and that he was in the employ of the express company as a driver.

That evening Nick went into a little private

CHAPTER II.

A TERRIBLE DISCOVERY.

The great detective had visited Marquette's store in Quebec, in the guise of an English

room back of the office, where the guests, whose tastes inclined that way, were wont to indulge in a quiet game of poker.

Pursall was one of a party of four at one of the tables.

After half an hour's play one of the quartette got up and left.

Nick saw his chance, and at once asked if he might take the vacant seat.

Pursall smiled genially, and said:

"Certainly, Mr. Sessions."

The fact that Pursall had become posted in reference to the name and character of the man he was assuming to be, pleased the shrewd detective greatly.

His work would now be much easier.

When the game broke up, Pursall and another of the players, introduced to Nick as Carl Dent, adjourned to the bar-room.

After a drink and a short conversation, they returned to the card-room.

The great detective sat at the table, playing solitaire.

During the four-handed game of poker, he had dropped a hundred and fifty dollars.

The money had been placed on the table in notes taken from a pocket-book that appeared to contain many thousands.

Pursall came up to Nick, and said in a low voice:

"Do you ever try the tiger?"

"When I get the chance," was the smiling reply.

"Dent and I are going to a point down the street, where one of the squarest games in the Dominion is conducted. Would you like to go along with us?"

"You bet!"

Pursall's eyes twinkled with satisfaction.

Presently the three men left the hotel.

On the way to the faro joint, Nick, whose tongue seemed loosened by the vast quantity of liquor he had pretended to drink while the poker game was in progress, informed his

companions, confidentially, that he was a high roller, and that he intended to go the pace at a stunning rate while he remained in Montreal.

This information made Pursall and Dent exchange secret glances of approval.

When Nick left the faro joint at daybreak he was several hundred dollars the worse for his encounter with the tiger.

But he was anything but dissatisfied with his position.

When he parted with Pursall and Dent, he was convinced that he had worked his points well.

After a short nap, and a light breakfast, he took a stroll down the street.

On his way back to the hotel, Dent passed him without speaking or even looking at him.

The man's face was pale, there were dark circles about his eyes, and his lips were moving spasmodically.

"He didn't see me," thought Nick, "and he has something weighty and unpleasant on his mind."

Dent walked rapidly until he came to the door of the express office opposite the hotel.

After looking into the office for a moment, he turned and went up the stairway, down which Jerry Pursall had come the evening before.

The great detective went into the hotel, and took a seat by one of the front windows, so that he could command a view of the buildings opposite, and waited for developments.

They were not long in coming.

A few minutes after Dent had disappeared, Jerry Pursall came out of the express office and went up the stairs.

"Dent has some packages to send off," was Nick's conclusion, "and the Irishman has got to get them."

A short time elapsed, and three men came down the stairs.

One was the fellow, Pat, whom Nick had shadowed from Quebec.

He bore several small parcels in his arms.

Behind him followed Dent and Pursall, supporting a heavy Saratoga trunk.

When the sidewalk was reached the trunk was put down, and Dent, after looking up and down the street in a suspicious manner, proceeded to wipe the perspiration from his face.

While he stood by the trunk, Pursall went into the express office, soon returning with a book, a handful of labels, and a paste-brush.

After his work as a representative of the express company had been concluded, and Dent had handed him some money, the man Pat put the trunk and the parcels on an express wagon and then mounted to the seat.

Pursall spoke a few words with Dent, sprang up beside Pat, and drove off toward the Grand Trunk Depot.

Nick Carter looked at his watch.

The train for the United States would leave in twenty minutes.

It was a five-minutes' walk to the depot.

After watching the wagon for a moment or two, Dent walked down the street to a saloon and entered.

As soon as he was out of sight, Nick Carter went up to his room.

Five minutes before the departure of the train, he was at the depot disguised as a tramp.

He had determined to find out, if possible, to whom the trunk had been consigned.

The peculiar conduct of Dent, added to two further facts—that Marquette was neither in the habit of sending large single consignments, nor of using the express in any of his smuggling deals—made him suspect that an unlawful game, out of the ordinary, had been inaugurated.

Could he trust the railroad express messenger?

A scrutiny of that individual's face, as he

stood in the open doorway of the express compartment, convinced Nick that he was an honest fellow.

The great detective looked about for the express wagon, and finding it gone and the two Irishmen nowhere in sight, stepped toward the door of the express car, just as the messenger was moving away from it.

Reaching the door, Nick looked in.

The trunk was in a corner of the car.

Beckoning to the messenger, Nick said, quickly:

"I am a detective, and I have reason to suspect that there is crooked work connected with that trunk."

"Show your credentials," returned the messenger, as he gazed at the disguised detective with suspicion.

"Here they are."

A glance at the documents submitted to the messenger made that individual obsequiously polite in an instant.

"Quite correct, Mr. Carter. And now what can I do for you?"

"I want to know the name of the party to whom that trunk is consigned."

The messenger looked at the tag.

"Mark Lees, Canton, N. Y."

"Thank you."

"Anything more, Mr. Carter?"

"Yes. Did you receive any package from the Irishman who placed the trunk in your keeping?"

"No."

"That's all."

The bell sounded, and Nick moved away.

That forenoon Chick, in New York, received a telegram which caused his immediate departure for Canton.

In the evening, still disguised as the tramp, Nick went to the telegraph office for an answer to his dispatch.

It was placed in his hands, and to his

amazement and horror it contained these words:

"I have captured trunk, and have Mark Lees. Inside of trunk was dead body of Logan, Government detective. He had been stabbed to the heart. Will keep secret. Go ahead."

CHAPTER III.

NICK MEETS WITH SURPRISE.

Nick Carter had great faith in Chick's ability to do as he had promised, and keep the affair of the finding of the body of the murdered Government detective a secret until the guilty parties had been brought to justice.

But he was not entirely easy in his mind, until next morning when he glanced over the dispatches in the daily papers, in his character of the defaulting bank president.

A Canton dispatch gave him an idea of the plan Chick had adopted.

Under a sensational six-header, the finding of the body was graphically chronicled.

It had been discovered in a trunk in a field near Grass River by a tramp.

The article concluded with the statement that there was nothing to show where the trunk had come from or to whom it belonged, and that the murder itself was shrouded in the deepest mystery.

In the afternoon of the same day came a letter from Chick.

After stating that he had placed the trunk with its ghastly contents in the field himself, after a consultation with the prosecuting attorney of the county, and had afterward caused it to be found, the young detective furnished this piece of gratifying information:

"The man Lees, who is one of Marquette's tools, was scared out of his wits almost when he found what the trunk contained, and I had little difficulty, therefore, in molding him to my will.

"It seems that he had received instructions

from one Dent, of Montreal, to dump the trunk into the river under cover of night, after removing all tell-tale marks and covering the trunk with a coat of blue paint.

"'Don't open it,' the instructions ran, 'for it contains nothing that will interest you.'

"Lees is an ex-convict, and he says that Dent has a hold on him of a character which he refuses to divulge, and that, in consequence, he felt himself compelled to carry out Dent's wishes in this and all other respects.

"At my request, the fellow wrote a letter to Dent, which will go with the post that conveys mine. In it he assures his employer that everything is all right, although he had to dump the trunk in a field instead of the river, on account of the number of boats that were plying in the stream when he set out to perform his work.

"'If you don't hear from me for a week, the letter concluded, 'you'll know that I am keeping shady to avoid a collision with the detectives, who are thick as bees around here to-day.'"

Nick tore the letter up, burned the fragments, and then prepared for an interview with Dent.

He was resolved to see this friend of Pursall at once, as it was possible that Dent might be frightened at the information conveyed in Lees' letter and make himself scarce.

Nick, in the character of Sessions, was mounting the stairs of the building where he supposed Dent had rooms when he met Jerry Pursall coming down.

"I want to see your partner," said the disguised detective, as he put on an anxious face.

"My partner?" with a sudden start.

"Yes, Dent."

"Oh!"

"I call him your partner," Nick went on, quickly, "because you are so much in each other's company."

"He's a friend of mine, that's all," returned

Pursall, shortly. "What do you want of him?"

"I want his advice on a delicate matter. Is he upstairs?"

"Yes. I'll take you to him."

Pursall turned, and went up stairs again, Nick at his heels.

The Irishman stopped at a door at the end of a long corridor, and rapped twice.

The door was soon opened, and Dent appeared.

Nick saw that he was nervous, and readily guessed the reason why.

"I am in need of a friend's advice," said the pseudo Sessions, "and being a stranger in Montreal I have ventured to call on you."

"I am a friend of yours, certainly," returned Dent, cordially. "Come in."

Nick entered, and so did Pursall.

"You may speak before Jerry," said Dent. "I know him well, and I wouldn't be afraid to trust him with my life."

"Here goes, then. There's a detective in Montreal who is worrying me."

Dent started slightly, but soon a smile overspread his face.

"You've nothing to fear from detectives," he consolingly remarked. "They can't arrest you on Canadian soil."

"He doesn't want me; he's after my money."

"Oh"—with a sudden change to keen interest.

"I haven't had a chance to bury it yet, and——"

"You carry it about you?"

"No; but it is not far from here."

"H'm. And you are obliged to look at it every now and then?"

"Naturally. To see that it has not been removed."

"Well, what kind of advice are you hunting?"

"I want you to tell me, if you can, what

action I must take to circumvent this detective."

Dent hesitated.

"Anything in it for us?" inquired Pursall.

"Of course. I am willing to pay twenty thousand dollars to save the rest of the swag."

"I think we might risk it," said the Irishman, in a whisper to Dent. "I don't believe we are in any danger."

Dent knitted his brows in thought.

The great detective shrewdly guessed what was passing in his mind.

Finally Pursall's friend said:

"I had just made arrangements to leave Montreal for a month, but I'll stay a few days longer and help you out, Mr. Sessions, if I can."

"Thank you," replied Nick, in a tone of relief.

"And now where is this detective?"

"He looked in at the hotel opposite about an hour ago. I don't know where he is staying."

"Describe him."

Nick gave the description of a Government detective, whom he had left in New York a few days before.

This detective was then about to leave for the West on a Government mission.

Dent nodded his head while Nick was speaking.

"I know the fellow," he said, with a frown. "His name is Patson."

Pursall turned pale at the name.

The great detective looked from one to the other with a questioning expression.

He knew as well as they that Patson had been the associate of the murdered Logan in many important Government cases.

"It's lucky for Patson that he is hundreds of miles away from Montreal at the present time," thought Nick, "or he might be in peril of his life."

Dent now spoke.

"We have got to find Patson," he said, with decision, "and the sooner the better."

"That's the idea," assented Nick, eagerly.

"Suppose you go out on the street, and walk around for a while. Patson will shadow you, if he is the man he used to be, and at the same time I will shadow him. See?"

"Yes, yes," returned Nick, with twinkling eyes.

When the disguised detective had left the room, Dent whispered a few words to Pursall, and then started for the street.

Nick reached the sidewalk in an excellent frame of mind.

The false tale he had told, had had the desired effect.

Dent and Pursall, scared by the letter from Mark Lees, had intended to leave town, but they would now remain and brave the consequences in order that they might secure the twenty thousand dollars promised them by the supposed St. Louis defaulter.

"Three days in their society," thought Nick, "ought to give me hold enough to arrest them, not only for the murder of Logan, but for their smuggling operations as agents of Marquette."

He walked down the street a couple of blocks, and then turned his head and looked back.

He was greeted by a startling surprise.

Not half a block in his rear was a man, who was walking rapidly in his direction.

The man was Patson, the Government detective.

Behind him at a distance was the villain, Dent.

And now ensued a curious and exciting game.

And yet here he was, and taking the part in reality which Nick had given him only in imagination.

The great detective did not waste any time in trying to guess what Patson meant in following him, or why Patson had come to Montreal.

Another and a more serious consideration engrossed his mind.

Patson was in imminent peril of his life, for Nick believed that Dent would kill the Government detective at the first favorable opportunity.

"I must put Patson on his guard," thought Nick, "and without arousing Dent's suspicions."

A chance of doing this soon offered itself.

Nick had just crossed a side street, when a horse attached to a spring wagon and without a driver dashed by him and around the corner at a furious runaway.

A moment later the wagon collided with a dray, went to smash, and the horse was thrown down with a broken leg.

The incident diverted Dent's attention from the man he was shadowing, for upon the dray he had discovered the figure of the Irishman, Pat, whom Marquette had sent from Quebec.

As he rushed forward to ascertain if Pat had been injured, Nick stepped up to Patson, who was then a few feet behind him, and said rapidly:

"If you want to see me, come in disguise to the Globe Hotel, room —, in an hour."

"All right, Mr. Sessions," returned Patson, without exhibiting any surprise.

"He thinks I am the defaulter," thought Nick. "I must undeceive him, or he will continue to follow me in spite of his promise."

"My name's not Sessions. I am——"

The great detective did not complete the sentence, for at the moment he began to speak Patson caught sight of a bulky pocket-book in the breast-pocket of Nick's coat.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FATE OF LOGAN'S PARTNER.

Nick Carter would never have given Patson's description to Dent if he had supposed that the Government detective was in Canada.

Supposing that it contained the money stolen from the St. Louis bank, he made a grab for it just as Nick was about to reveal his identity.

"You fool," hissed the now angry detective, as he caught Patson by the wrists and held him tightly, "I'm no defaulter."

"Too thin, Mr. Sessions. You can't work any of your smooth games on me."

A struggle would have taken place between the two men had not Dent appeared at this juncture.

Finding Pat, the Irishman, unharmed, he had quickly retraced his steps from the scene of the collision.

He saw Patson dash at the supposed defaulter, and at once rushed to the false Sessions' assistance.

A couple of sledge-hammer blows sent Patson sprawling on the sidewalk.

"Run," whispered Dent to Nick, "and leave me to look after this snoozer."

Nick nodded his head, and started down the street.

But he did not go far.

Half a block away from the corner a crowd of men and boys was collected about an organ-grinder.

Nick passed through the crowd, and then being out of Dent's sight, looked about him for a place that might offer him temporary concealment.

A few rods below him was the wreck of a large brick building.

A fire had gutted the inside of it a few days before.

The front walls were still standing.

Nick hastened to the place, and, passing through the opening in front, where a doorway had once been, found a spot secure from observation behind the vault.

Here he made a rapid change in his personal appearance.

He was on the street again, in the character

of the tramp, just as Patson and Dent were leaving the corner.

Nick noticed with some surprise that they appeared to be engaged in friendly conversation.

"What kind of a game is he working on Patson, I wonder?" ran his thoughts. "He must have gained the detective's confidence by some plausible yarn, or else Patson is pretending that he has been taken in."

Dent and his companion walked rapidly for a few blocks.

Then a cab was hailed, and they got into it, and were driven up a long hill in the direction of Mount Royal.

Nick followed in another cab.

Dent and Patson left their vehicle in front of an old, unoccupied building standing upon a terrace within half a mile of the summit of the mountain, and at some distance from the nearest habitation.

Nick dismissed his driver about a block from the house, and then went forward on foot.

He saw Dent go up the steps to the front door, take out a key, and enter, leaving Patson outside.

Presently Dent came to the door, beckoned to the Government detective, and then both disappeared within the house.

Believing that the detective was in imminent danger, Nick ran to the rear, picked the lock of the back door, and entered the kitchen.

Moving along cautiously, he was about to try the knob of a door, which opened into the dining-room, when the sound of voices made him pause.

Dent and Patson had come into the room he was about to invade.

"This house is for rent, and I am the agent," Nick heard Dent say, "and the man you are after was here yesterday looking at it. He was to give me an answer this evening."

"And you think he will take it?" queried Patson.

"Of course, he will take it, else I would not have brought you here."

"I see. You believe that he has already secreted his stolen plunder somewhere about the premises?"

"That's the idea. He came here yesterday, on purpose to hide the money."

"Then let us begin the search for it at once," responded Patson, eagerly.

"All right. Suppose we try the cellar first."

"That suits."

Nick Carter quickly made up his mind to a certain bold course of action.

It would never do to permit Patson to descend to the cellar in company with Dent, for the Government detective's murder would certainly follow.

Dent had lured Patson to the house, for the purpose of putting him out of the way, not only that he might do the supposed St. Louis defaulter a favor, but also that he might still the tongue of the dead Logan's partner, who, if allowed to live, would undoubtedly give him trouble.

Before the door opened, and the two men stepped into the kitchen, Nick Carter had slipped into the pantry, partially closing the door after him.

Dent opened a door on the other side of the room, disclosing stairs which led to the cellar, and motioned Patson to descend.

The Government detective smiled, and shook his head.

"You are the leader," he said. "Go first, and I'll follow."

At this moment Nick Carter emerged from the pantry.

He had resumed his disguise as Sessions, the defaulter.

Patson turned, and regarded him in blank surprise.

"I am tired of this espionage, and I've a

great mind to kill myself," he said, in a tone of reckless desperation.

Another instant and his pistol was out, and the muzzle was pressed against his forehead.

Patson sprang forward, grasped his arm, and snatched the weapon from his grasp.

Nick sank to the floor, and covered his face with his hands, while it seemed that the great sobs shook his frame.

Dent shut the cellar door, and looked at the false Sessions in stupefied amazement.

What did the scene mean?

Had the man he looked upon as the St. Louis defaulter really weakened, or was he playing a part?

If the latter theory was the correct one, then what was Sessions' object?

Undecided how to proceed, he remained silent, and looked at the cowering figure on the floor for his cue.

Nick readily interpreted Dent's silence, and broke out falteringly:

"I give in. I will turn up the money, and you may take me back to St. Louis, Patson."

The Government detective drew a deep breath of satisfaction.

He had not come to Montreal in search of Sessions, but seeing the man he supposed to be the defaulter in town, and knowing nothing of the actions of the officers who had charge of the case, he determined to recover the stolen money, if possible, and then transact the business which had brought him to Canada.

"Where is the money?" he eagerly asked.

"It isn't here, for one thing."

Dent scowled.

The pseudo Sessions must be weakening.

"Where is it?"

"Up the hill, buried under a rock."

"Let's go there and get it."

Nick sighed, and arose to his feet.

Unobserved by Patson, he shot Dent a glance full of sinister meaning.

The villain's confidence in the man whose interests he had sought to further began to revive.

Nick walked to a corner, and beckoned to Patson.

When the Government detective was close to him, and facing him, Nick, glancing over his shoulder at the expectant Dent, inclined his head toward the door.

The villain took the hint, and went out quickly.

When he had gone, Nick stepped to the door and closed it.

Then he said to Patson, in a low, earnest whisper:

"I am Nick Carter, and your life is in danger. Hush! Not a word"—as Patson was about to speak—"but do as I tell you, and we'll win the fight."

Patson had once met the great detective in New York, and the flash of the eye, the peculiar resonance of the voice, and the magnetism of manner, all conspired to carry the conviction to his mind that he stood in the presence of Nick Carter.

Alive to the situation in an instant, Patson said, promptly:

"I am at your service."

"There must be a struggle, and I shall pretend to give you a blow on the head, and you must pretend to be dead."

"Good!"

Dent's hand was fingering the knob outside, when he heard the sounds of a desperate scuffle.

Re-entering quickly, he saw the false Sessions just rising from the seemingly unconscious form of Patson on the floor.

A deep groan from the Government detective had preceded his entrance, and the victim was now turned over on his face, stiffened out and motionless. The hilt of a dagger was disclosed as if driven through the body, skillfully so arranged by Nick.

Nick arose to his feet, and confronted Dent, his face taking on an expression of malignant joy.

"He's done for, I reckon," was his hoarse comment. "Had to do it, you see."

"You have taken the job out of my hands," was the smiling reply.

"But you'll be paid for it, just the same,"

"You're a gentleman."

Nick grinned.

"I never go back on my friends," he said, quietly.

Dent looked at the form of Nick's victim, and said:

"We've got to get the body out of here."

"Let's put it in the cellar."

"Too risky. A tramp might come in and discover it."

"What of it?"

"Then somebody might turn up who had seen me enter the house with Patson."

A short silence ensued.

"I have it," said Dent, as if a sudden thought had struck him. "I'll go down town, get a big trunk, and have Jerry put it in his wagon, and drive up here with it. Then we'll dump the body in the trunk, and cart it away somewhere."

Nick looked thoughtfully at the floor.

"That's a pretty good plan," he said, slowly; "but if ever the trunk is found, might it not be traced to you?"

Dent answered with a reassuring smile.

"No chance of it, for I buy my trunks of a man who is as true as steel."

"You deal in trunks, then?" Nick asked, with an innocent look.

"I have use for them occasionally."

"Do you favor any particular kind?"

"I am partial to Saratogas."

Dent would not have made this admission had he not been convinced that his companion was a murderer.

An expression of shrewd understanding

showed itself in the great detective's countenance.

"I see, I see," he said, with a smile. "You are the cove who fixed Logan. A neat job, very neat," he added, before Dent could put in a word, "and proof positive that you won't be likely to make a botch of this job."

"Don't have any fears on my account, Sessions."

"I won't. Go for the trunk, and I'll stay here and keep out tramps."

He gazed at the body of Patson, and nodded his head complacently.

"It's a good thing I took a notion to follow you two," he continued, "for if I hadn't waltzed in when I did, you might have been laid out yourself."

"Nonsense."

"Not much. Patson was onto your game, and you would never have been able to surprise him."

"How do you know?"

"Common sense gives me the knowledge. He did not come to Montreal to find me, but to hunt the man who put his partner, Logan, to death."

Dent turned pale.

"But"—he stammered—"he could not have suspected me!"

"Don't be too sure. Patson was a keen one, and he knew all that Logan did, I'll gamble a hat on it."

"Then you have done me the biggest kind of a favor in laying him out," responded the villain, earnestly.

"And helped myself a trifle into the bargain," said Nick, with a twinkle of the eyes.

But little more was said.

Dent soon took his leave.

When the tall form had disappeared from view down the hill, Nick told Patson he might get up.

The Government detective, who had been in full possession of his senses during the

whole of the conversation between Nick and Dent, arose quickly, and stretched out his hand, which the great detective warmly grasped.

"Carter, you're a brick," was Patson's enthusiastic comment, "and if we don't get that fellow dead to rights and avenge poor Logan's death, then——"

Whiz!

A bullet from an air gun cut the window-pane back of the speaker, and entered his head at the base of the brain.

With a hoarse, gasping cry, he staggered forward a few steps, and then fell forward on his face, dead.

CHAPTER V.

NICK SCORES A POINT.

Nick Carter ducked his head just as a second shot was fired by the unknown assassin.

Then he made a rush for the door.

A third bullet grazed his shoulder as he turned the knob.

As he stepped into the yard, the murderer of Patson showed himself.

He was Pat, the Irishman.

There was a quick interchange of shots, and then the man whom Nick had followed from Quebec dropped his pistol and fell to his knees, his face contorted with agony.

The great detective reached his side just as he rolled over on the ground, and ceased to breathe.

At this moment a number of neighbors, attracted by the shots, were entering the front yard.

Nick had no desire to meet them, for a discovery of his identity would naturally follow, and this would interfere with his scheme to entrap Dent, the murderer of Logan, and also expose the workings of Marquette's underground railway.

He had not yet been seen, and when the men arrived at the kitchen door he was over

the back fence and speeding down a narrow lane, flanked by high board fences, and leading to a broad street with a few scattered houses in sight.

An hour later Nick stood before Dent, in the latter's office.

"What's—what's the matter?" the villain anxiously exclaimed.

"Old Nick to pay. Where's Jerry?"

"Gone to the house to fetch the stiff away."

"Then he'll run his neck into a noose."

Dent's teeth chattered with fear.

"Spit it out," he gasped hoarsely. "What has happened?"

Nick looked the picture of terrified excitement as he began.

"The man Pat came to the house and shot Patson through the window."

"The blanked fool. Shot a dead man?"

"Yes. I was lifting the body from the floor, and was about to fulfill a duty which you had neglected."

"Oh, I forgot to go through him, and secure his papers and valuables. Well?"

"Then pif! went an air gun, and a bullet bored a hole in Patson's head."

"Pat must have been off his nut—too much booze, I expect. What next?"

"Then I blazed away."

"You did?"—regarding Nick with suspicion.

"Certainly," was the cool response. "I did not see Pat, and how was I to know that the next shot might not play hob with my own thinking apparatus?"

"Yes, yes, I see," Dent hastily rejoined.

"And though I fired at random, I hit the mark. Pat croaked in a jiffy."

Dent, to Nick's surprise, smiled, and rubbed his hands.

"I'm not sorry," he said. "Pat was a fool, and Mar—that is, those who trusted him made a big mistake. He always pretended to know a little more than any one else. Said

there wasn't a detective on earth that he couldn't circumvent."

"A little cranky, I reckon," remarked Nick, carelessly.

"That's what he was. Why, no longer ago than yesterday he insisted that a detective had followed him from Quebec, and that his object was to do up Mar——"

Dent stopped a moment, looked at Nick keenly, and then impulsively went on:

"I may as well make a clean breast of it. Pat was in the employ of Marquette, who works the fur racket on Uncle Sam's revenue officers. He was sure when I saw him last that a detective had got onto some of Marquette's curves, and was now in Montreal, trying to dig up evidence that would send the old man to the wall."

"Patson was the man he meant," said Nick, with decision.

"You're right. I had not thought of it before."

This discovery seemed to please Dent.

But he was not yet entirely rid of his anxiety.

"There'll be an investigation," he moodily remarked, after Nick had finished his story, "and some mug will show up who saw me enter the house."

"If you were seen, then I am in the same boat," rejoined Nick.

"That's so. We're both in for it, I reckon."

"What's the matter with our disguising ourselves until we know just which way the wind blows?"

"Good idea. I can fix myself up so my own mother wouldn't know me."

"I haven't had much experience," said Nick; "but I think I can work the change racket to deceive your Canadian coppers."

"Then let's get about the business instantly."

"I'll have to go to my room to make up. But I'll see you in the course of an hour."

"Don't come here. It wouldn't be safe."

"How about your trunk friend?" suggested Nick, carelessly.

"He'll do. Yes, the very place."

"Where is it?"

Dent furnished the information quickly.

The man who sold Saratogas had his place of business in a basement on a street near the river.

The great detective left Dent in a satisfied frame of mind.

An hour later he was in front of the building occupied by the trunk dealer.

Descending the basement stairs, he gave two sharp knocks at the door.

Dent answered the summons quickly, but gave a start of surprise when he saw before him a ragged "glass put in man" from the sunny land of Italy.

He was about to shut the door hurriedly, when Nick Carter spoke:

"How's this for a disguise?"

"It beats the world."

"It isn't bad, I think," returned Nick, complacently. "Yours will do, too."

Dent had disguised himself by changing his attire, and assuming a black wig and beard.

Once in the basement, with the door locked behind him, Nick said:

"Where is your friend?"

"The trunk dealer?"

"Yes."

"He has mizzled."

"What!"

There was more at the bottom of Nick's expression of disappointment than Dent supposed.

"He must have got wind of the Patson racket, and skipped out."

"What had he to fear?"

"I sent Jerry here for a trunk, and Jerry must have got it. See?"

"Your friend is a timorous sort of a fellow, then?"

"He generally manages to look out for number one. But he won't betray us, though."

"Where has he gone? Have you any idea?"

"Yes. I know where to find him."

"Out of town?"

"No. He has another crib not far from here."

"Then, let's start for it instanter."

Dent thought a moment. Then he said:

"I'll go out and see if he is there; you remain here in the meantime. I won't be gone long."

Nick did not like this programme, but he felt that to make any objection might arouse the villain's suspicions.

So he allowed Dent to depart.

Nick was left in possession of the basement for fifteen minutes.

During that time he ransacked the apartment thoroughly.

The only discovery of importance that he made was in the shape of a crumpled letter, which he fished out of a little stove in a corner.

It was in a pile of odds and ends, and there was evidence that a match had been applied to the mass.

The fire had burned a little hole in the trash, and then had encountered a wet rag and gone out.

The letter was dated Quebec, and was unsigned.

It read as follows:

"I have written to D. to keep his ears and eyes open and be more than usually circumspect of L., for another country may have let loose the entire pack of Washington hounds. But the fox will elude them if you and the

others exercise a sharp lookout and do not lose your wits. The messenger I send is a keen one, and is not likely to be hoodwinked. Take this advice about the last representation of the hound fraternity."

The great detective smiled as he folded the letter, and put it in his pocket.

"Marquette is the author of this effusion," he said to himself, "and the messenger he refers to is Pat, the Irishman, whose earthly career I was compelled to end at the vacant house up the hill. L. is poor Logan, and I am the hound, I suppose."

Two sharp knocks at the door interrupted Nick's cogitations.

"Dent has made mighty good time," he muttered, as he hurried forward to admit the knocker. "He must have met his friend on the way to the latter's hiding-place."

The door was opened, and a short, thick-set, ugly faced young man sprang in.

He was trembling with excitement and terror.

At the sight of Nick his terror increased, and he made an attempt to draw a pistol from his hip-pocket.

"Quit that," was the stern command, "and come to your senses. I am Dent's partner."

This statement might not have made the stranger drop his hands to his side.

But the presence of a cocked revolver, the muzzle of which was within a few inches of his head, did.

"Where's Dent?" he hoarsely muttered.

"Gone out to find you. Didn't you meet him?"

"No. I expected to find him here."

"He said you had a place a short distance from here, and he went out to see you, promising to return immediately."

"Then he's done for," returned the trunk dealer, with a groan.

"How so?"

"Jerry Pursall was arrested when he got to the house where——"

"Where Dent and I had our little racket with Patson, the detective," put in Nick, as the trunk dealer hesitated.

"So you were the man who stood in with Dent?"

"Didn't I say I was Dent's partner?"

"So you did."

The trunk dealer now felt that he could speak freely.

"Jerry was arrested, as I said, but he got away from the officers while they were taking him to the police station, and his first move was to hunt me up.

"Not finding me at this place, he went to the other crib. While we were talking at the back door the officers hove in sight.

"Jerry went over the back fence, and while the officers were chasing him I slipped out by the front way and came here to warn Dent, who had made an appointment to be at my place at this time."

The trunk dealer paused, and looked toward the door, as if expecting that a stern demand for admittance might be made at any moment.

"They'll come here next," he said, with chattering teeth.

"Is there no way to escape but by means of the front door?" asked Nick.

"There's the back way. But the building may be surrounded."

"We'll try the back way, anyhow."

With these words, Nick seized the trembling wretch by the arm, and dragged him toward the rear of the basement.

The back door opened into an alley.

A quick glance, with the door opened a few inches, showed the alley to be deserted.

A tremendous pounding on the front door made them quickly hurry out into the open air.

Nick's eyes roved from side to side of the alley as they ran along.

Descrying a gap in a fence where a board had been torn off, the great detective pointed to it, and said:

"We may find a temporary refuge by crawling through."

"You're mad," was the reply, "for it will put us in the back yard of the man who owns the building we just left—my landlord."

"It can't be helped. In with you."

Nick shoved the trunk dealer through the gap in the fence, and quickly followed him.

In one corner of the yard was an ice-house.

Nick dragged the trunk dealer toward it.

There was no ice in the house.

The floor was of sawdust, several feet in depth.

Nick quickly formed his plan.

"I am going to bury you in this sawdust," he whispered to the trunk dealer, "and then go out and run a bluff on the coppers. So get down on your knees, and help me scoop out a hole."

He was covered with the sawdust in one corner, and the floor bore its ordinary appearance when Nick left him and stepped out into the yard.

The great detective, who had come to the rendezvous selected by Dent with a kit of tools with him, walked up to the foot of the back steps of the landlord's house and began to cry out:

"Tins to menda—glass pud'n—glass pud'n."

He was engaged in this employment, with his back turned to the fence, when a harsh voice saluted his ears:

"Dry up. Nobody wants glass puddin' here. They've just had dinner."

Nick turned to behold a sergeant of police. Back of him stood three policemen.

"Alla righta," he said, with a scowl, and made a movement to depart.

The sergeant stopped him with a wave of the hand.

"How long have you been in this yard?"

"Da tima?"

"Yes."

"I coma five mins ago."

"Any one come in the yard through that hole in the fence while you have been here?"

"One man rush through lika he was scare lika da dev'."

"Aha! And which way did he go?"

"Aroun' da housa. Whiz! I coulda play soma marble on hees coat taila."

The sergeant rubbed his hands.

"What sort of a man was he?"

"Leetle man ina da hight, but beeg ina da bod'."

"That's the fellow," said the sergeant, and with his men he made a dash for the front.

Nick saw them depart, and then looked up the steps of the house.

The kitchen door was closed.

After calling out several times more, and the door still remaining closed, Nick went back to the ice-house.

He was now prepared to make a decisive move in the game he was playing.

After helping the trunk dealer to his feet, he proceeded to appropriate the fellow's revolver.

"What's that for?" the rascal demanded, in surprise.

"That's business," returned Nick, coldly.

"I don't see——"

"Because you are a fool," was the quick interruption. "Well, I'll open your eyes. You are my prisoner."

The trunk dealer uttered a choking cry, and then made a dash for the door.

Nick caught him by the coat-collar, and flung him into a corner, where he lay in a heap, the picture of abject misery.

Then he said, humbly:

"You've got me, I reckon. Now, what do you want?"

Motto's words were welcome ones.

They gave Nick the cue he had been working for.

"What do I want?" the great detective repeated. "I want to send Dent to the gallows, and"—giving the trunk dealer a terrible look—"and I am going to do it, and also send you along with him, unless——"

"Unless what?"

"Unless the confession you shall make is important enough to make me change my mind."

"I had no hand in the murder."

"Prove it," said Nick, sternly.

"I can and will."

CHAPTER VI.

DENT'S DESPERATE VENTURE.

"Last week," began the trunk dealer, "I received a visit from the detective who was afterward killed."

"What did he want?"

"Just what you are getting now—my confession of the relations that existed between me and the Marquette gang."

"But you didn't confess, then?"

"Not much. I was not ready for that sort of business then. Logan said he had evidence that I was one of the gang, and that if I would squeal he would use his influence to get me off without punishment. Just about that time Dent walked in.

"I saw in an instant that the detective had no idea who Dent was, so I at once introduced him as my attorney.

"Dent twigged, and when I requested Logan to repeat his offer to my legal representative, Dent nodded his head and was at once the personification of the lawyer, who scents a fee and an interesting case.

"Logan's statement was soon made.

"Come up to my office," said Dent, "and we'll talk this matter over in private."

"Logan shook his head. 'It won't do at all,' he replied, 'for if I leave this coon'—meaning me—'he will take leg bail, too quick.'

"Very well," said Dent. "We'll settle the business here."

"Both were seated, and Dent drew his chair close to Logan as he spoke.

"Before we start in," remarked Dent, "I would like to see your credentials. Your statement that you are a Government detective is not enough."

"Deceived by the speaker's words and manner, Logan put his hand into the breast-pocket of his coat for the purpose of withdrawing some papers, but as he made the motion, Dent sprang upon him and clutched him by the throat.

"The attack was so sudden and unexpected that the detective had no chance to defend himself."

"I never made a move in the whole affair, and in a minute it was over. Logan lay dead on the floor, stabbed to the heart.

"That evening the body was taken away from the basement by Jerry Pursall.

"Where it went I never knew until I read the newspaper account of the find, at Canton, N. Y."

"Does Marquette know who killed Logan?"

"I don't think he does. He may suspect, but he is a man who never asks questions in matters of that kind. It is enough for him to know that an enemy has been removed from his path."

There was silence for a few minutes.

Nick had received information which would likely be the means of placing the halter around Dent's neck, in the event of the villain's capture, but he had not yet solved all the mysteries of Marquette's underground railway.

He did not intend to return to Washington, until he had achieved a double object, the arrest of Logan's murderer, and the exposure of Marquette's smuggling system, together with the arrest of all the offenders.

"Anything else you want to know?" asked Motto, somewhat nervously.

"Yes. You must tell me all you know about Marquette's smuggling operations."

"He sends his goods to Dent, and Dent works the quiet business. A lot of goods came in this morning, but they won't likely go out to-day, now that Dent and Pursall, who help him, are in hiding."

"How do the goods come?"

"In packages, a single article in a package. Each one is marked with a single letter or figure, in blue pencil, and then all are placed in one box. The box is consigned to Dent by express, and the mail of the same day brings him a plain tag for each package containing the name and address of the consignee, and bearing a number or figure corresponding with that on the package."

"I see. A very ingenious scheme, and when Dent gets a consignment from Marquette, it becomes his duty to devise ways and means for sending the goods it contains to the United States without payment of duty."

"You've struck it."

"How does he work it?"

"I don't know. Better ask him, or interview Pursall."

"Perhaps I may pick up a clew in Dent's office," said Nick, carelessly.

"You might."

"I'll try it. But I'll have to get through with my business with you first."

"I thought you were through."

"Not quite. I won't be through until I see you safe in jail."

"But you promised to let me off if I would squeal," whimpered Motto.

"No, I didn't. I intimated that the con-

fession wouldn't hurt you, and it sha'n't. You'll probably get a light sentence if you tell the same story in court."

This was some consolation, and the trunk dealer accepted the situation without further words.

Nick escorted his prisoner to the jail, told his story, and received the congratulations of the officer in charge.

Dent and Pursall, he learned, were still at large, and the pursuing officers had obtained no clew as to their whereabouts.

After leaving the police-office Nick went to Dent's office.

The door was locked, but a skeleton key soon opened it.

Not a box or a package containing fur goods from Marquette's establishment could be found.

And yet the trunk dealer had asserted that a consignment from Marquette had reached Dent in the morning.

There was but one explanation of the absence of the goods—Dent had disposed of them so that they would reach their several destinations before Nick's visit to the office.

The great detective looked at his watch.

The train for New York by the Grand Trunk, Delaware and Hudson would leave in an hour.

Nick went to his room in the hotel, packed his traps, resumed the character of Sessions, the defaulter, went downstairs, paid his bill, and then walked over to the express office.

A few questions elicited the information that Jerry Pursall had driven an express wagon to the depot earlier in the day, and that after receiving a number of boxes and parcels from the office of the company, had gathered several armfuls of packages from private parties upstairs.

The private parties resolved themselves into Dent.

At the depot Nick found that none of Mar-

quette's blue pencil packages had gone into the express-car.

What had become of them?

Nick was standing on the edge of the platform nearest the street, his brows knit in perplexity, when he saw a brakeman come out of a hotel opposite the station, shove something under his coat, and then cross the street.

Hardly another minute passed before another brakeman emerged from the hotel.

He did not repeat the action of the first, but as he approached the station platform Nick saw that his coat bulged out suspiciously in front.

The great detective watched him until he disappeared in the baggage-car.

Then he hurried across the street and entered the hotel office.

He arrived just in time to see a third brakeman step behind the counter, enter the cloak-room, and take up a number of small packages in a corner.

These he thrust under his coat, and was in the act of buttoning up his garment when Nick rushed in and brushed roughly against him, as if by accident.

The packages fell to the floor on the instant of the collision.

The brakeman gave utterance to a savage oath, and might have assaulted the disguised detective, if Nick had not burst out with a string of apologies.

One glance at the packages sufficed to show him that they had come from Marquette, for he had seen the mark of the blue pencil.

He paid no attention to the brakeman while the packages were being picked up, but with his back turned to the fellow appeared to be hunting for some article which he had left there.

The brakeman was on the street before Nick emerged from the cloak-room.

Luck had favored him at a most opportune moment, for at this hotel he had found an ad-

ditional station on Marquette's underground railway.

"The case up to this point," ran his thoughts, "is now as plain as a pikestaff.

"Marquette sends his goods in a mass to Dent.

"Dent then sorts them, puts on the tags, and gives them to Jerry.

"Jerry takes them along with the other parcels with the ostensible design of conveying them to the depot.

"But he does nothing of the kind. He stops at the hotel before he gets to the depot, deposits Marquette's goods in the cloak-room, and leaves the brakemen, who follow the double occupation of working for Marquette as well as the railway company, to play the next trick.

"Now the problem to be solved is this: How and where are the packages secreted on the train?"

Nick was back at the station with fifteen minutes at his disposal when an express wagon was driven up to the platform, and a number of empty bags were dumped out.

A shrewd suspicion crept into Nick's brain as he gazed at the bags.

When he saw one of the three brakemen who had come out of the hotel remove the bags to the baggage-car this suspicion developed almost into a certainty.

After the bags had been taken away, the great detective followed the driver of the wagon into a saloon close by.

The man's face was honest, and Nick believed he could be trusted.

"Say, my friend," he said in a broad Yankee dialect, "I'm naterally curious; all the family wuz. Like ter find eout things."

"Well, how can I favor you?"

"I wanter know why on airth yew dumped empty bags at the depot? I allers had an idee that the railroad carried things with somethin' in 'em."

"Those bags contained New York papers when they came up. Now they are going back to be refilled. See?"

The expressman now turned his attention to his liquor, and Nick walked out.

He bought a second-class ticket, and found a seat in a compartment which opened into the baggage-room.

A couple of Chinamen, a red faced Scotchman absorbed in a newspaper, and an old man with white hair and beard, who sat muffled up in a corner and shivered, although it was not cold, were his fellow passengers.

At the point of entry into the United States a number of revenue officers inspected the train.

Nothing out of the way was discovered.

Nick took advantage of the wait to wire certain instructions to Chick.

At Lawrenceville, Nick's assistant, having come from Canton by a special, got on board.

He had made up to look like a farmer, and when he entered the second-class compartment he merely glanced at Nick, and then sat down and took out a paper.

In a short time Nick got up and went to the platform.

As he passed Chick he threw a ball of paper into his lap.

Chick opened it without being observed by his fellow passengers, and read the following:

"The old man in the corner is Dent. Some of Marquette's packages are in the baggage-car, concealed in the news-bags piled up under the desk. Three brakemen are implicated. One of them is acting as baggage-master on this trip. We'll take Dent first. When I enter the car be ready to give me your assistance."

Chick crumpled the note in his hand and then glanced at the corner where Logan's murderer still sat.

To Young Hercules' surprise the disguised villain was regarding him fixedly.

Did he suspect that a net was being drawn about him?

While Chick was pondering the matter, Nick Carter re-entered the car.

At the same moment Dent sprang from his seat, and dashed into the baggage compartment.

The two detectives reached the door to have it slammed in their faces.

The train was some miles from the next station, and going at a high rate of speed.

"He daren't jump off," said Nick to his assistant, "and if we act quickly we'll get him."

They threw themselves with all their force against the door.

It fell in with a crash, and they sprang to one side to dodge an expected bullet.

But none came.

A glance into the baggage-car disclosed the acting baggage-master as the only occupant.

Bidding Chick cover the man with his revolver, Nick rushed through the room and on to the platform outside.

What he saw filled him with disappointment and rage.

Dent had slipped the link and detached the coupling between the engine and baggage-car, and was now clambering over the wood and coal in the tender with his pistol pointed at the engineer.

There was already a gap of several yards between the detached parts of the train.

The cars left behind came to a standstill in a few minutes, for they were on an upgrade, while the engine became a mere speck in the distance.

Nick Carter returned to the baggage compartment in anything but an enviable frame of mind.

Chick had arrested the acting baggage-master, and that worthy was now sitting dejectedly on a stool, handcuffed.

"How far are we from the next station?" asked Nick, addressing the prisoner.

"Five miles," the acting baggage-master gruffly answered.

The two brakemen who were equally guilty with the speaker in having assisted in Marquette's smuggling operations, entered the car at this juncture.

Feeling sure of his position, Nick at once ordered them to throw up their hands.

Believing that they were in the presence of two train robbers, the brakemen instantly complied.

It was only when they had been handcuffed that the truth was made known to them.

Then they raved and swore at their stupidity.

Nick examined the bags under the desk, and soon brought to light the tell-tale packages.

Having accomplished this stroke of business, the great detective went forward just in time to meet a number of passengers who were coming toward the baggage-car with the conductor.

In a few words he revealed his identity, and announced what he had done.

Then, placing the prisoners in the hands of the conductor, with a request that they be turned over to the Canton officers, Nick and Chick started in pursuit of Dent.

Half a mile from the train they came to a farm-house, where they procured horses.

The country road ran within sight of the railroad, and they followed it until they came in sight of the engine standing motionless on the track.

Beside it stood the engineer, frowning and shaking his head.

"Busted the lever, and stove in the boiler, and knocked the throttle out of gear," he explained, in answer to Nick's question as to the nature of the injury.

"Where's the fireman?"

"Gone to town to telegraph for another engine."

"And the rascal who did the damage—where is he?"

"Went over that way," pointing toward a clump of trees on the banks of Grass River.

Without asking how Dent had managed to subdue the engineer and his mate, and disable the engine, Nick rode swiftly toward the river, Chick at his heels.

To shorten the distance they soon left the road, made an opening in a fence, and crossed a long field.

It was not until evening that they learned what had happened after Dent sprang on the engine.

Neither the fireman nor the engineer were armed, and by using his pistol as an argument, the villain induced the engineer to push the engine forward to the spot where Nick and Chick had found it.

When it came to a standstill, Dent forced the engineer to bind the fireman with cords found in one of the boxes of the cab.

This done, he tied up the engineer himself, and then proceeded, with the aid of a crow-bar, to disable the locomotive.

Having accomplished his purpose, he took to the field and ran in the direction of the river.

A few minutes after he had gone the fireman freed himself from his bonds, and then cut the cords that bound his comrade.

Before another engine arrived at the spot, Nick and Chick were across the river and riding furiously toward Canton.

They had got on the track of their quarry on reaching the river; a small boy, engaged in fishing, having informed them that a man answering Dent's description had crossed a foot-bridge a short distance below him and then taken the road for Canton.

"He must have a friend there," said Nick, "or he would never have made such a venture."

"We can guess the name of the friend,"

said Chick, with a meaning look at his superior.

"Lees, of course, the man to whom the trunk, containing the body of Logan, was consigned."

"That's the man. Dent swallowed the letter I induced Lees to write, and, of course, he believes that Lees is in hiding at a place familiar to both, instead of being locked up in jail."

"We must find the hiding-place, Chick."

"Lees must tell us where it is, and he will, without doubt."

Nick Carter breathed more freely. The capture of the villain, to his mind, was now a question of only a few hours.

They rode to the Canton jail, and Chick asked the jailer to conduct them to Lees' cell.

"Can't do it."

"Why not?" with an uneasy glance at Nick.

"He is not here. He escaped before daylight this morning."

CHAPTER VII.

CHICK'S DEADLY PERIL.

The two detectives were about to remount their horses, when the whistle of a locomotive was heard.

"That's our train," said Chick.

"Yes, it is."

They rode up to the station and dismounted.

The conductor had fulfilled his promise, for the three brakemen were found handcuffed in the baggage-car, as Nick had left them.

After seeing them locked up, with a special guard at the jail to prevent an escape, Nick and Chick took up the search for the missing Dent and his accomplice, Lees.

Several hours were spent in scouring the outskirts without finding a trace of the fugitives.

Late in the afternoon Nick and Chick set out to return to town.

They were passing a dilapidated building—once used as a church—in a small yard, overgrown with weeds, when Nick reined in his animal, and pointed at a small object lying on the ground by the side of the road.

It was a thick paper label, of the exact size and style of the ones used by Dent in his smuggling business.

A gleam of understanding showed itself in Chick's eyes.

Nick dismounted and picked it up.

"Just as I thought," he said, in a low voice. "It's a Marquette label, and has a number as well as an address. Must have been dropped accidentally by the man we are after."

Chick looked curiously at the old church building.

Nick followed the direction of his eyes, and nodded his head.

"The hiding-place is there," young Hercules whispered.

"I think so."

They tethered their horses and entered the yard.

Nick went around to the rear, leaving Chick to enter from the front.

As the great detective reached the end of the building, the back door opened and a man's head protruded.

Nick darted quickly out of sight, repressing with difficulty the exclamation of amazement that rose to his lips.

For the man was neither Dent nor Lees, but P. D. Marquette, the chief of the smuggling firm, and the owner of the great fur emporium in Quebec.

When and why had he come to Canton?

Nick was trying to find an answer to this question, when soft footsteps were heard on the back steps.

Marquette was evidently coming out.

The actions of the detectives in front of the

church must have been observed, and the smuggler was undoubtedly making an effort to escape.

Nick was flattened up against the side of the building, close to the corner.

He peered around the corner and saw that Marquette was making for the back fence, beyond which was an apple orchard of several acres.

He walked with many side and backward glances.

Before he was half-way to the fence, Nick drew his pistol and made a dash for him.

Marquette uttered a cry of terror and broke into a run.

There was a heap of brush close to the fence, and Nick was within a few feet of it, and in another instant would have had his hand on Marquette's shoulder, when a man suddenly arose from behind the brush with a heavy club in his hand.

Before Nick had time to act, the club was hurled with crushing force at his head.

The aim was a true one, and the great detective fell to the ground unconscious.

With a few rapid words to Marquette, the assailant, who was no other than Dent, sprang over the body of his victim and ran to the back door of the church.

Entering a small room used for receptions, he glanced hurriedly about it, and then tip-toed to the door opening into the church proper.

He listened a moment, and hearing nothing, opened the door softly and stepped in.

The church was empty.

His face paled suddenly.

What if one of his plans had miscarried?

The noise of feet above his head seemed to increase his fears.

On one side of the pulpit-platform, was a door opening into a staircase leading to the bell-tower.

The door was open, and the sounds seemed to proceed from the tower.

Dent advanced to the door, and called out in an anxious voice:

"Who's there?"

The answer calmed his agitation at once.

"Lees."

"What has happened?"

"The cursed spy twigged the front-door racket and got in. But I lured him up here, and knocked him out."

"Is he dead?"

"That's about the size of it."

"Come down, then."

"All right. And how have you made it?"

"I gave the other detective a sickener, and if he isn't dead, he soon will be."

Steps were heard approaching the head of the stairs, and Dent was looking upward in anticipation of seeing Lees' face, when, with an angry exclamation, the man above moved back into the little room from which the bells were rung.

The sounds of a fierce struggle made Dent hurry up the stairs.

As he reached the top he met with a startling surprise.

A club descended on his head and made him see stars.

His senses did not entirely leave him, but while he was on his hands and knees, endeavoring to get at his pistol, he was flung over upon his back, and his arms were pinioned.

Half dazed, he looked up into the stern, implacable face of Chick.

Turning his bloodshot eyes from Chick, the villain saw the form of his accomplice, Lees, lying in a corner.

Cords were upon the fellow's wrists and ankles, and his face was covered with blood.

"He isn't dead," said Chick, "only battered up a little. He was foolish enough to run against my fists, when he might have avoided

physical punishment by throwing up his hands."

"How in the fiend's name did you get away with him?" snarled Dent.

Chick shrugged his shoulders.

"How did I get away with you? By exercising a little strategy. I made a monkey out of your tool there by pursuing similar tactics."

Chick did not further enlighten the villain, but he had worked his points in this wise.

When he reached the front door of the building, after parting with Nick, he tried the knob and found the door to be unlocked.

This circumstance made him suspicious of a snare.

Therefore instead of boldly entering, he gave the door a kick, sending it flying inward, and then stepped quickly to one side.

As he did so an old mattress, on top of which was a man, descended to the floor from some point above the doorway with a thud that shook the building.

Quick upon this descent Chick was inside.

Before the man, who proved to be Lees, could rise to his feet, the young detective was raining sledge-hammer blows upon his face.

Inside half a minute Dent's tool was not in a condition to make even the slightest resistance to the designs of his muscular and determined foe.

After he had bound Lees, hand and foot, the young detective looked up to see from what station the rascal had dropped.

"Very clever," Chick muttered, as he gazed, "but not as clever as it would have been if the front door had been locked."

Each side of the church interior was provided with a gallery.

The space between the two railings was about ten feet.

This space, at the end toward the street, and above the doorway, had been bridged by a couple of heavy planks.

On this planking, with the mattress by his side, Lees had stationed himself by Dent's instructions, when Marquette, from his point of observation in the bell-tower, had seen the detectives stop in front of the building and tether their horses.

"One of them will enter from the front," said Dent to Lees, "and by coming down on him with the mattress you can easily get away with him. In the meantime Marquette and I will look out for the approach at the rear."

Marquette had arrived at the rendezvous half an hour in advance of Dent.

The young detective, after binding Lees, had carried him up the stairs to the little cubby-hole of a room in the bell-tower, and there waited for developments, which were not long in coming.

After re-examining the cords which bound his two prisoners, Chick descended the stairs.

Not only Dent's words, but the appearance of the villain in the church, some time after Chick's entrance, and Nick's movement toward the rear, convinced him that the great detective had met with a reverse.

Instead of making his exit from the building at the rear, the young detective went out the way he had entered.

Then he cautiously worked his way to the rear, taking the side of the church opposite to that along which Nick Carter had gone.

His feet gave no sound as he walked softly on the grassy path, and he was telling himself that the chances were in favor of surprising Marquette, who must be guarding Nick somewhere at the rear, when he heard the front door open and some person hurriedly enter the old church.

Chick hesitated for an instant as to his course of action; as to whether he should go on, as he had intended, to the assistance of Nick, or re-enter the church to discover the character and intentions of the man who had just entered.

The voice of the newcomer decided him.

"Hullo, there, Lees," it called out, from within the church. "Where are you?"

The two prisoners in the tower had not been gagged, and both answered the call.

The steps of the stranger were heard ascending the stairs of the bell-tower just as Chick rushed in by the front door.

He was hurrying forward to intercept the newcomer before he could release Lees and Dent, regardless of the dangerous odds against him, when like a flash the man's identity was revealed to him.

He could be no other than Jerry Pursall, Dent's partner in evil at Montreal, of whose doings Nick Carter had given him full particulars.

Disguising his voice, he called out from the middle of the room:

"Jerry, is that you? For God's sake, get out of here quick. There's a whole mob of officers coming down the street."

In the terror caused by this announcement Jerry Pursall's customary caution fled.

He reached the bottom of the stairs in two bounds.

Chick was at the doorway to meet him.

Pursall's amazement was so great when, instead of confronting a friend, he looked down the muzzle of a cocked revolver, held by a man whose flashing and honest, resolute face betrayed his character and purpose, that he trembled like a leaf and caught at the jamb of the door for support.

"What does this mean?" he gaspingly uttered. "A joke?"

"You'll find it no joke if you don't put up your hands."

The hands went up.

After relieving Pursall of a revolver and knife, Chick forced him to lie down and submit to be bound.

Not a word had been uttered in the tower-

room after Chick had addressed his first words to Pursall.

A voice—Dent's—now called out:

"Pack him up here, Mr. Detective. We're lonesome."

"That's what I'll do," said Chick to himself, "and then I'll gag all of you."

Lifting the body of Jerry Pursall in his strong arms, Chick ascended the stairs.

When his head appeared above the opening at the top he saw a sight that instantly drove the blood from his face.

Dent and Lees were on their feet, and beside them stood Marquette.

Dent held a pistol in his hand, and it was pointed at the young detective's head. He had been caught in a trap.

In another instant a report rang out.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TABLES ARE TURNED.

When Dent pressed the trigger of his revolver Chick ducked his head, dropped his human burden and went tumbling down the stairs.

He escaped death by a scratch.

The bullet grazed the top of his head and imbedded itself in the woodwork beyond him.

Dent was the first to peer down the stairs.

He saw Chick lying motionless on his face at the foot, and instantly came to the conclusion that his enemy was dead.

A second glance disclosed Pursall doubled up a few feet beyond the body of Chick.

Marquette pushed by Dent and went down the stairs.

He gave the body of the detective a vicious kick, and then stooped over the pulseless form of Jerry.

"Dead, is he?" queried Dent, as he started to descend the stairs.

"Yes."

Lees was still in the little tower-room, instructions having been given him by Dent to

remain there by the window as a lookout until the moment arrived when all three might leave the building.

It was now close upon dusk.

In half an hour at furthest Marquette and his accomplices might venture forth.

Marquette arose to his feet when Dent reached the lower floor.

"We must get rid of these carcasses," the latter said, quickly.

Marquette nodded his head.

"It's a pity you didn't put a knife into Nick Carter's heart while you were about it."

"I ought to have done so, I suppose, when I found out the fellow was that terrible sleuth, but I have never killed any one yet, and I hadn't the nerve to stab a helpless man."

"Bah! Your morals are so mighty slack in other directions that you might have done him up without batting an eye, it seems to me," replied Dent, in a tone of deep disgust. "Now, if I had been in your place——"

"You can settle him now if you like," interrupted Marquette, hastily. "We'll pack him in here and——"

"Put him to sleep beside his fool-hardy partner, eh?"

"Do as you please about that," said Marquette, resignedly.

"All right, then."

As he spoke the hoot of an owl outside was heard.

"That fellow is forcing the pace a little," remarked Marquette. "But, then, he is probably in the same boat with us. He is in a hurry for darkness to set in."

Dent grunted something in reply, and then turned and bent over Chick, in order to satisfy himself that the great detective's assistant was dead.

At that moment Chick, whose senses were never more alert, suddenly leaped to his feet, and before Dent could recover from his sur-

prise he received a blow under the ear which sent him staggering against Marquette.

Another blow stretched the murderer of Logan senseless upon the floor.

As the villain went down Marquette made a dash for the staircase.

Chick tried to head him off, but was too late.

Marquette was near the top of the stairs when the click of Chick's revolver was heard.

"Stop!" demanded the young detective, "or I'll fire."

The smuggler, wild with excitement and terror, paid no heed to the words.

Crack!

A scream of pain followed the report, and one of Marquette's arms hung useless at his side.

But he never stopped in his upward course.

Another bullet whizzed past his head as he reached the landing at the top of the stairs.

There was but one clear idea in his mind—to rush to a little door which opened on the roof of the L part of the building, and let himself down to the ground from the eaves, a distance of twelve feet.

His foot was on the landing when the muzzle of a revolver was thrust against his temple, and he heard the cold, insistent command:

"Stop!"

One look into the face of his enemy, and the smuggler sank to his knees and covered his face with his hands.

For the man who had him at such a terrible disadvantage was Nick Carter.

Chick heard the voice of the great detective, and was ready to yell for joy.

"All right up there?" he shouted.

"All right. And how is with you, Chick?"

"I'll have things in shape as soon as I put the handcuffs on Dent."

Each detective finished with his prisoner at the same moment.

They met on the stairway and clasped hands.

"How in the world did you get into that tower?" asked Chick, "without coming through the church?"

"Come up and I'll explain."

They entered the tower-room.

Lees lay beside Marquette with his ankles bound, and handcuffs on his wrists.

Nick Carter told his story in as few words as possible.

When his senses returned to him, after the blow from a club on the head given by Dent, he found himself behind the brush heap by the fence, bound hand and foot, and Marquette engaged in searching his person.

An examination of Nick's pocketbook revealed the disguised detective's identity.

"So you're the great Nick Carter, are you?" chuckled the smuggler. "But you're not great enough or smart enough to work your points against me, though. You'll have to go to school again if you ever get out of my clutches."

Nick gritted his teeth, but said nothing. Marquette went on:

"I reckon I'd best leave you to Dent's tender mercies. He's got it in for you strong, for you fooled him clear up to the time you went on board the train from Montreal. Then he got on to you. Dropped on to your Sessions game all at once, don't you see. And now your cake is all dough, for here in my hands is the evidence that you obtained from my train boys, and here you are. How do you like the looks of things, eh?"

No answer, but at that moment Nick did some savage thinking.

Marquette put away the articles he had taken from Nick's pockets, and then arose to his feet.

"I'll go in and see how Dent is getting on," he said, "but I won't be long. Ta, ta."

As soon as he was out of sight Nick began to tug at his bonds.

Fortunately for him, Marquette was a novice in the art of rope tying, otherwise Nick might have failed to free himself.

Inside of five minutes, however, he was on his feet and ready for business.

He was moving along the side of the church, when he chanced to glance up at the tower, and saw the face of Lees at the window.

The rascal, luckily, did not perceive Nick, for at the moment his eyes were fixed on the street.

Nick crept back to the rear and began to look about him.

"This church must have a tin leader to drain the roof," he said to himself; "yes, here it is out of sight of the window. I'll try to give Mr. Lees a little surprise."

Placing his feet on the iron rings supporting the leader, he cautiously mounted to the roof.

When he saw the door opening from the tower, his satisfaction was extreme.

The shingles of the roof were old and warped, and Nick had no difficulty in climbing up to the ridge.

He was approaching the door of the tower on his hands and knees, his pistol in readiness for instant use, when Lees suddenly opened the door and looked out.

The fellow had seen nothing of a suspicious nature from the window for some time, and had concluded to open the door at the back, and ascertain if all looked safe at the rear.

A cry of alarm was frozen on his lips by the low, hissing whisper:

"Not a word, not a sound, or I will blow your brains out."

Lees lacked the courage and resolution of Dent, and he weakened at once.

He had just been handcuffed when Chick began to make things lively below.

That night Marquette, Dent and Lees occupied separate cells in the Canton jail.

The evidence the great detective had gathered was supplemented by a full confession from Lees.

Dent was hanged for the murder of Logan, and Marquette and his other accomplices got long sentences in prison, the Canadian authorities uniting with Uncle Sam's officers in the prosecution.

The Marquette-Dent underground railway ceased its operations when the master-spirit of the great fraud was run to earth.

Nick and Chick were handsomely rewarded by the Treasury Department for their brave and skillful service.

THE END.

The next number of the NICK CARTER WEEKLY will contain "In the Clutch of the Law; or, Nick Carter's Chain of Evidence," by the author of "Nick Carter."

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